



Far Beyond Borders: KYRGYZSTAN

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Based on the materials from the photo tour
organized by Intersputnik in October 2025



Foreword

The great Kyrgyz writer and thinker Chingiz Aitmatov believed that achievements of the scientific and technological revolution should belong to everyone and facilitate the exchange of spiritual values. New technologies should contribute to collaboration, communication and the elimination of prejudice. Everything Chingiz Aitmatov wrote focused on bridging gaps between cultures, and the characters in his works, which have been translated into 150 languages, evoke powerful emotions and provoke deep reflection.

Kyrgyzstan will host the 55th anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications in 2026. This beautiful country has been a member of the Organization for more than a quarter of a century. As part of our **Youth far Beyond Borders** project, we provided an opportunity for young photographers from Intersputnik member countries to touch upon the traditions of the Kyrgyz people and create their own cultural bridge using modern photographic appliances and their talent. Four young photographers from Bulgaria, India, Russia and Kyrgyzstan spent a week travelling around the country, talking to people of different generations and social groups and capturing, in our opinion, the most important thing – beauty in simplicity, strength and love in human sincerity. Each of the photographers saw the richness of the Kyrgyz land and felt its energy in their own way.

In this album, the works of young photographers serve as vivid and accurate illustrations of Chingiz Aitmatov’s writings.

I thank our colleagues from the Ministry of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, who helped us to organize this photo tour.

I invite you to discover modern Kyrgyzstan through the eyes of our project participants.

Ksenia Drozdova

Director General
of Intersputnik



Katerina Boyadjieva (b. 1999). Sofia, Bulgaria

Katerina (b. 1999) was born in Germany and raised between cultures, later moving to Bulgaria before continuing her education in the United Kingdom. She studied Illustration and Visual Media at the University of the Arts London (UAL), where she developed a strong foundation in visual storytelling through illustration, animation, and 3D design.

Her creative direction shifted during a month-long university project in Senegal in 2019. During this time, she began documenting everyday moments and environments with a camera, discovering photography as a powerful medium for capturing real-life narratives. What began as a hobby soon developed into a central focus of her creative practice.

After graduating, Katerina worked in several creative agencies, gaining experience in animation, 3D production, and visual media. Over time, she became increasingly drawn to the immediacy and authenticity of photography and video.

Today she works independently, running her own photography studio. Her work combines a background in illustration and motion design with a documentary sensibility, focusing on thoughtful visual narratives and emotionally resonant imagery.

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Pubarun Basu (b. 2001). New Delhi, India

Pubarun Basu (b. 2001) is a photographer, researcher, and cultural storyteller based in Delhi, India. In 2021 he became the first Indian recipient of the Sony Youth Photographer of the Year award and was later named among the youngest honourees on the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia list in the Arts category.

At the core of his practice is a long-term visual ethnography of the river Ganga, supported by organizations such as National Geographic and The Nature Conservancy. Through this project, Pubarun explores the relationship between ecology, spirituality, and the lives of communities along the river. His work documents environmental displacement, the emergence of climate refugees, and shifting cultural identities on the river’s fragile islands.

His photographs have been exhibited internationally and featured in publications including The Telegraph, BBC, and The Guardian. One image from his Ganga series was displayed at the United Nations Headquarters in 2023.

Alongside photography, Pubarun works at the intersection of art, education, and environmental advocacy, developing storytelling projects that translate climate science into accessible community narratives.

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Darika Kasymbaeva (b. 2002). Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Darika Kasymbaeva (b. 2002) is a photographer and visual storyteller from Kyrgyzstan. Her work focuses on atmosphere, texture, and personal visual narratives, approaching photography as an intuitive and open form of creative expression.

Drawing inspiration from everyday life and cultural memory, Darika’s images explore subtle moods and emotional resonance. Her practice reflects a sensitivity to light, form, and material presence, often capturing quiet moments that reveal deeper connections between people, places, and objects.

Alongside her artistic work, she contributes to the development of two local jewelry brands inspired by Kyrgyz nomadic heritage. This engagement with design and craftsmanship informs her visual language, deepening her perception of form, detail, and cultural symbolism.

Through this interdisciplinary approach, Darika continues to expand her creative voice, connecting her photographic practice with contemporary art projects and international exhibitions.

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Ivan Gazukin (b. 1995). Moscow, Russia

Ivan Gazukin (b. 1995) is a photographer currently based in Moscow, Russia, specializing in portrait and wedding photography. He began his professional commercial practice several years ago in Istanbul, where his early work was shaped by an encounter with an unfamiliar environment, capturing street life, nature, and the atmosphere of a southern city. His portfolio now includes projects across seven countries, reflecting an expanding geographical scope of his practice.

Over time, his focus gradually shifted from street and individual storytelling toward wedding and reportage photography, where he continues to develop his visual language. Ivan’s creative path began without formal academic training, driven instead by a strong inclination toward storytelling through visual media. He considers his broader artistic journey to be at an early stage, remaining open to new directions and experiences. His earliest artistic influence was cinema, which remains a central source of inspiration in his work today.

Alongside photography, Ivan has explored other creative disciplines at different stages of his life. He completed directing courses at a film school and spent two years studying in an acting studio, participating in 12 theatrical productions across Moscow venues. These experiences have contributed to his understanding of narrative, composition, and emotional expression.

His search for a distinct visual style remains ongoing, though a strong cinematic sensibility continues to guide his approach. Drawing on the language of film, Ivan seeks to create imagery that evokes the emotional depth and immersive experience of cinema, shaping narratives that resonate with a sense of atmosphere and storytelling.

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THE SPIRIT OF THE LAND

Kyrgyzstan. A land where nature speaks louder than words. Where traditions are not memories, but a living rhythm carried by the wind, by the mountains, by the people who call this place home

Far Beyond Borders: Kyrgyzstan





*“What could be more beautiful than the steppe at dawn! It was as if a vast azure sea had spread out and frozen in place with blue waves, some shimmering with dark green and yellow.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, *The Camel’s Eye*)*





Far Beyond Borders: Kyrgyzstan







*“There were other stones too—‘naughty’ ones and ‘kind’ ones, and even ‘cunning’ ones and ‘silly’ ones.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, *The White Steamship*)*





“Only one thing, it seems, I did not think about then: who had planted these trees? What had that unknown person dreamed of, what had he said as he set the roots of the saplings into the earth, with what hope had he raised them here, on this hillside?” (Chingiz Aitmatov, The First Teacher)



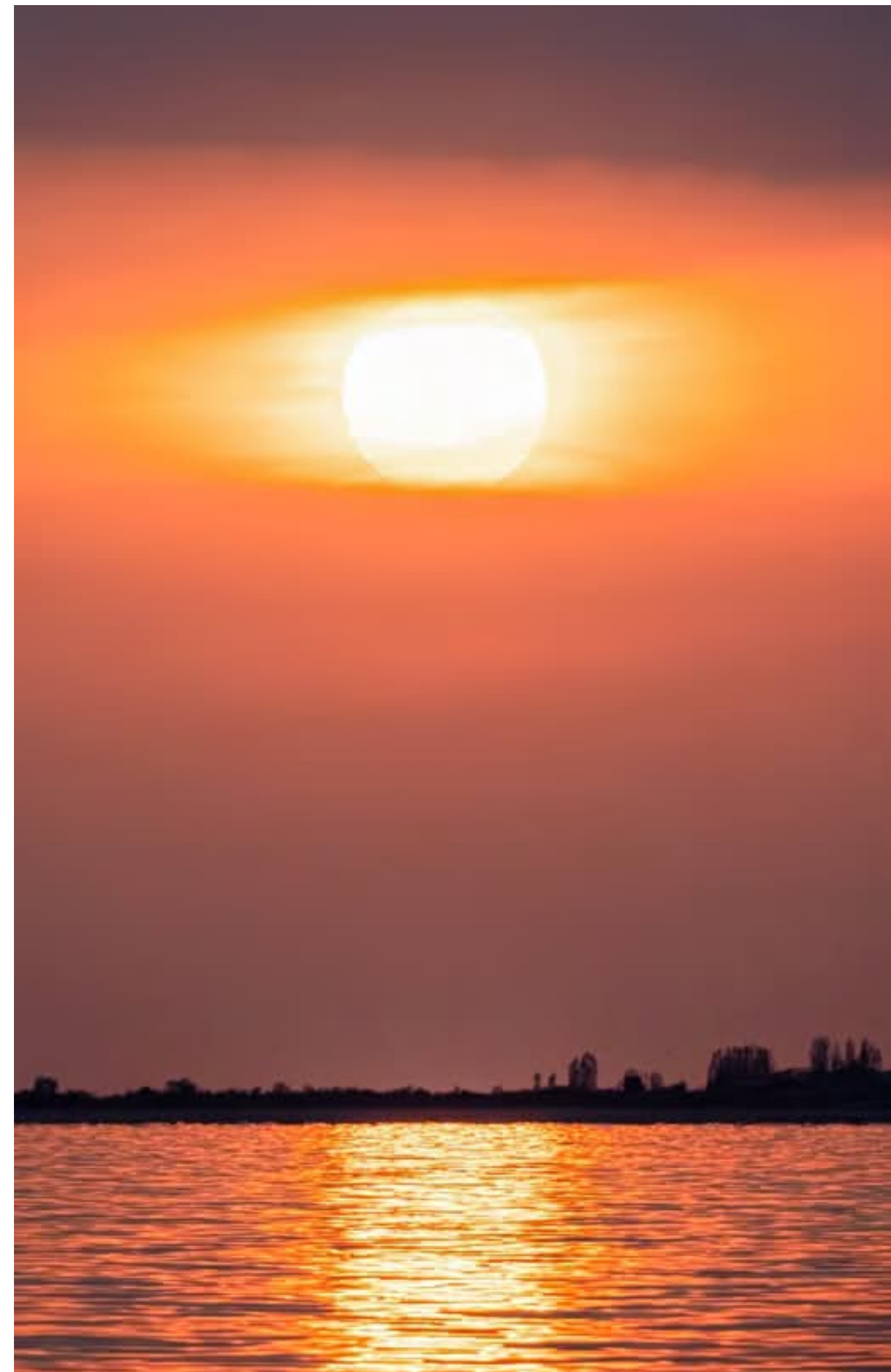
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“Goodbye, Issyk-Kul, my unfinished song! I would have taken you with me, with your blue waters and your yellow shores, but I cannot, just as I cannot take with me the love of a beloved person.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, My Little Poplar in a Red Headscarf)

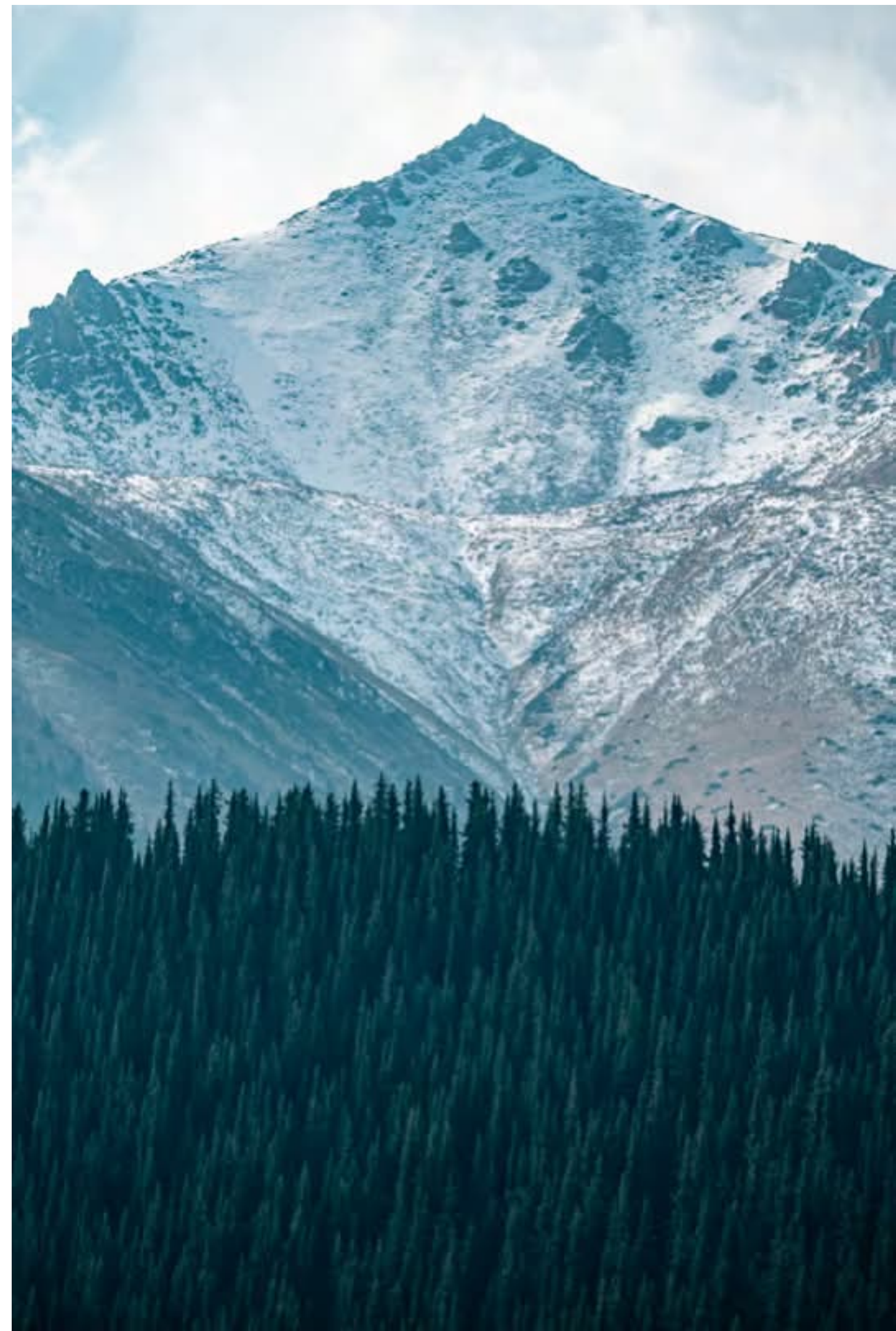


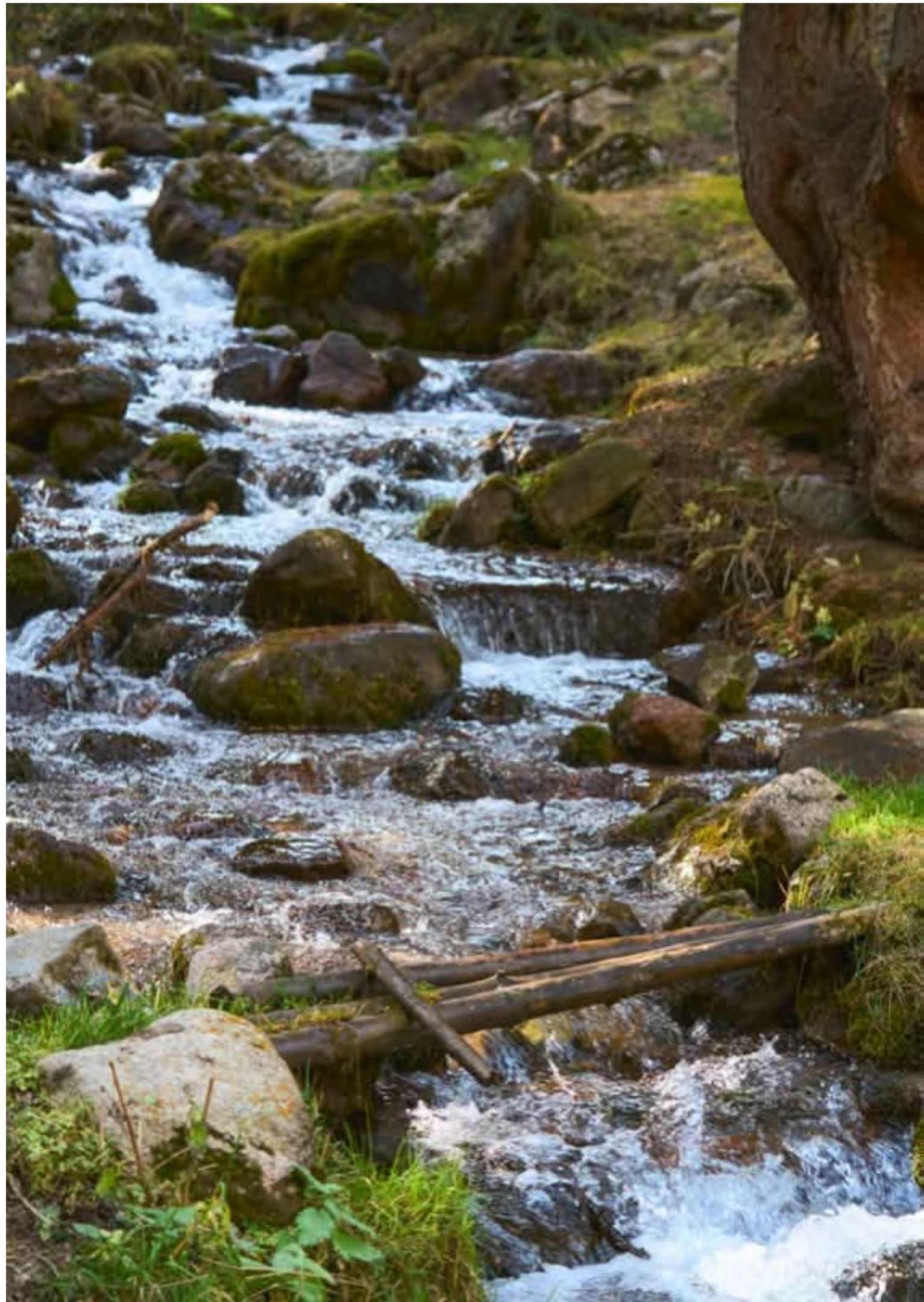












“There are such springs in the mountains: a new road is laid, the path to them is forgotten, travelers turn there less and less often to drink water, and the springs gradually overgrow with mint and blackberry. Then you won’t notice them from the side. And rarely does anyone remember such a spring and turn to it from the highway on a hot day to quench their thirst. A man comes, finds that overgrown place, parts the thickets, and quietly gasps: cool water of extraordinary purity, untouched by anyone for a long time, strikes him with its calm and depth. And in that spring he sees himself, and the sun, and the sky, and the mountains...”
(Chingiz Aitmatov, *The First Teacher*)





“The flock hurried along, flowing in a stream of backs and heads as it climbed the slope. The neighboring shepherds were already driving out their sheep. Here and there along the hillsides, in the hollows and ravines, the sheep flocks went to gather the eternal tribute of the land – the grass. They wandered in gray-white clusters amid the russet and brown motley grass of the autumn mountains.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)





ECHOES OF TRADITIONS

Here, culture lives in the hands of artisans and in the warmth of a family home. In ancient music that still fills the air... in games, crafts, and rituals passed from one generation to the next. This is a land that holds its heritage with pride — in the strength of its mountains and in the stories written across centuries

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“Then it turned out that open-range animal husbandry was unthinkable without yurts. And now Tanabai was himself amazed that he could have said such things, that he could have run down the yurt, for nothing better had yet been invented for the semi-nomadic life. How could he have failed to see in the yurt a wonderful invention of his people, where every smallest detail had been precisely tested by the secular experience of generations?” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)







“Perched on the branches, we wondered: was this the edge of the world, or were there beyond it the same sky, the same clouds, steppes and rivers? Perched on the branches, we listened to the unearthly sounds of the winds, and the leaves whispered back in unison about alluring, mysterious lands hidden behind the misty distances.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, The First Teacher)

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“Jamilia was beautiful. She was slim and well-built, with straight, coarse hair braided into two tight, heavy plaits. She had a deft way of tying her white head-scarf slantwise across her forehead, which was most becoming and set off the warm glow of her smooth, dark skin. When Jamilia laughed, her almond-shaped, blue-black eyes lit up with youthful verve, but when she suddenly broke into the salty songs of the village, her beautiful eyes shone with a light that was anything but girlish.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Jamila)







“Meanwhile, the games had started in the circle — wrestling on foot and on horseback, pulling each other from the saddle, picking up coins at full gallop, and other competitions. But all this was only the introduction; the main event would begin out there, where the riders had gone.”
(Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)

“Blessed be our ancestors who left us these men’s games of the fearless!”
(Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)









“This time the game of kok-boru was being played out in the steppe hollow. This is a kind of equestrian football, in which the carcass of a goat is used instead of a ball. A goat is convenient because the hair is long and tough and it can be snatched up from the horse by a leg or by the hide. Once again the steppe rang with the ancient cries, once again the earth began to rumble like a drum. An avalanche of mounted fans, yelling and shouting, rushed about after the players.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)



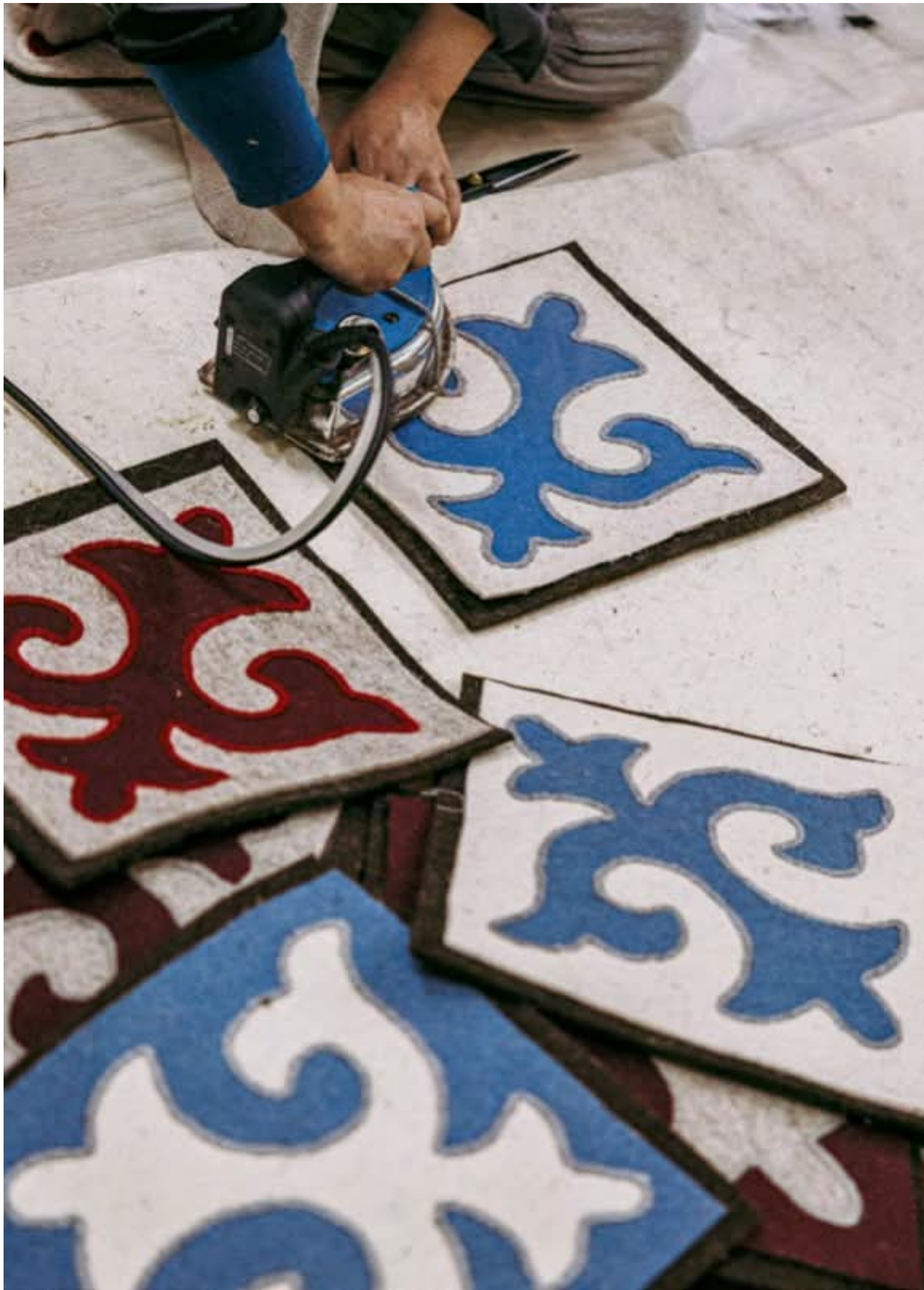


“What ornaments, what utensils they could make from silver, copper, wood, leather! And not expensive, but beautiful things they were. Each one special, unique. You don’t see such things now... They buried the old handcrafts completely, and yet in a man’s hands lie his soul and his eyes...” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)













“Dzhaidar took the temir-komuz, brought it to her lips, touched the thin steel string with her finger, breathed on it, then drew air into herself, and the ancient music of the nomads flowed forth. The song of the she-camel who had lost her white camel calf. For many days she runs through the desert land. She searches, she calls her young. She grieves that she will no longer lead him behind her in the evening hour above the precipice, in the morning hour across the plains, that they will no longer pluck the leaves from the branches together, nor walk the shifting sands, nor wander the spring meadows; she will never again feed him with her white milk. Where are you, dark-eyed foal? Answer me! The milk flows from her udder, her over-full udder, flows down her legs. Where are you? Answer me! The milk flows from her udder, her over-full udder. White milk...” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)









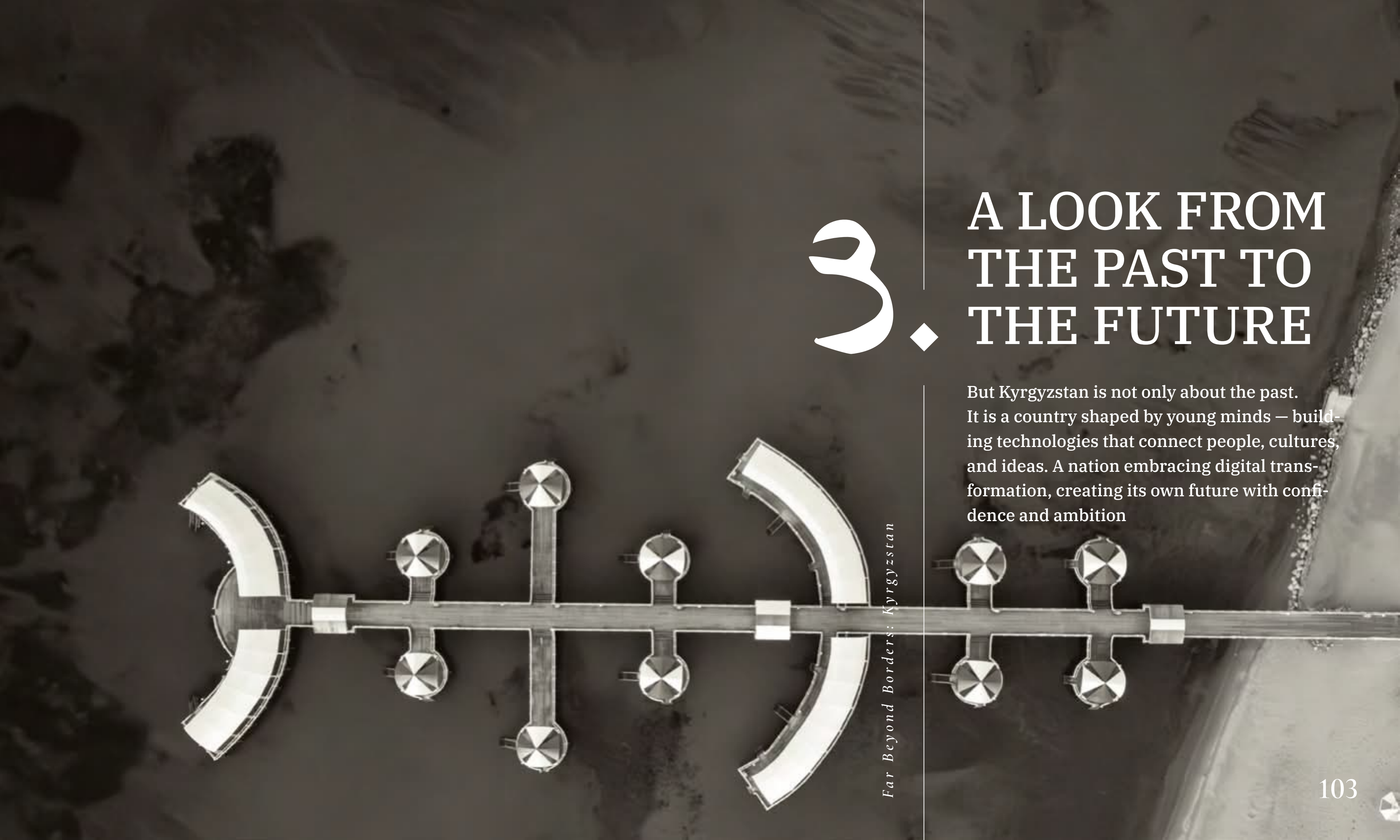
"...when the meat steamed on the platter and everyone sat down in a circle, all troubles were forgotten." (Chingiz Aitmatov, The White Steamship)





“A guest has come — pour the tea.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)





3.

A LOOK FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

But Kyrgyzstan is not only about the past. It is a country shaped by young minds — building technologies that connect people, cultures, and ideas. A nation embracing digital transformation, creating its own future with confidence and ambition

Far Beyond Borders: Kyrgyzstan



"A person does not die as long as those who knew him live."
 (Chingiz Aitmatov, *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*)







"I rather believe the cult of war must, in time, give way to a culture of peace" (Chingiz Aitmatov, From an interview)

















“After all, these are the constructions of new, young masters. We are growing, the population increases year by year. We no longer fit in the aul, we are building new streets. This is good.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Mother’s Field)



birinchi

IT-hub

technopark

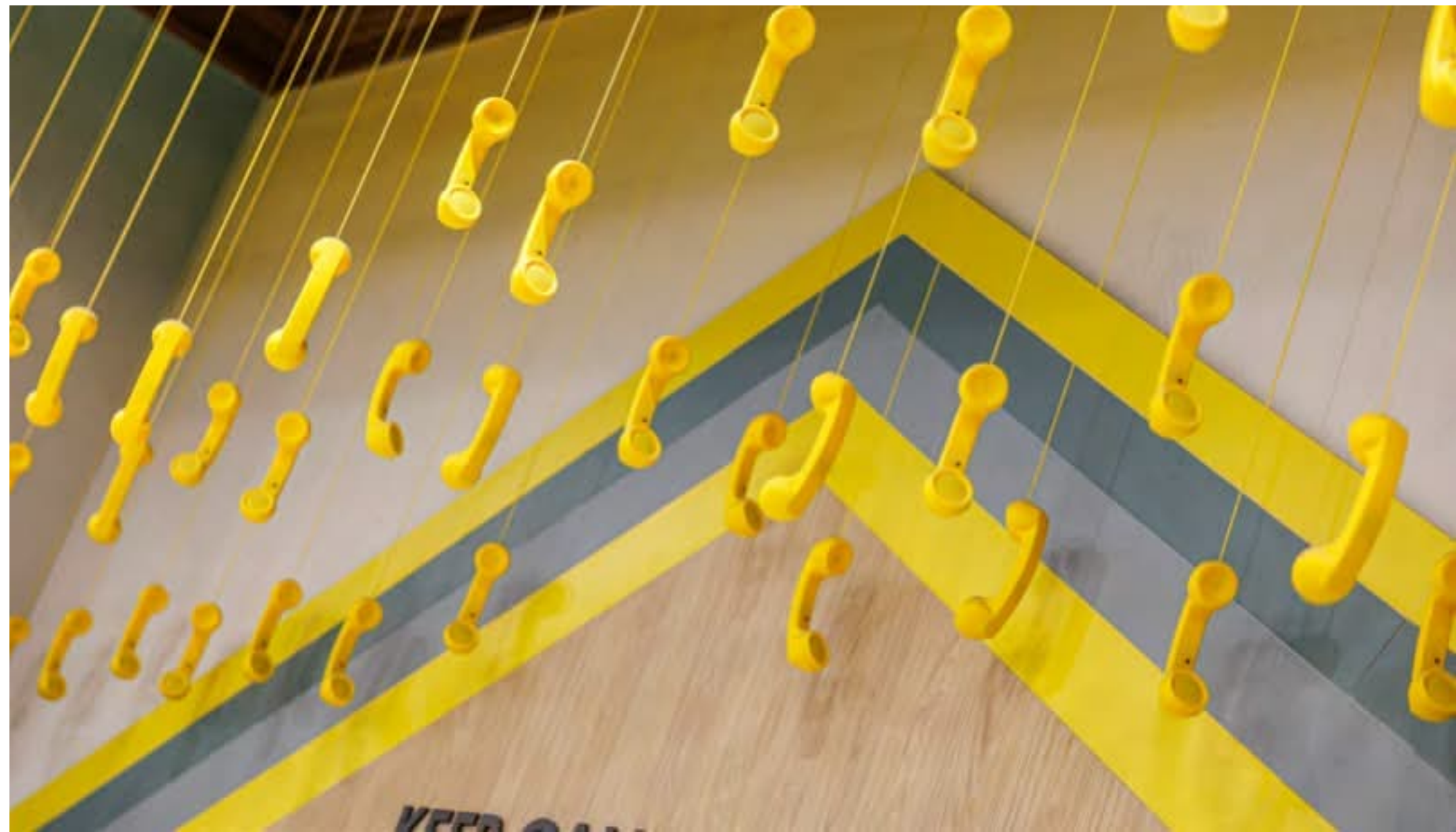
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“You say — the youth, but I judge by my own son — the current youth seems not bad. From his stories I see that they have capable guys at the institute. Well, time will tell. Literate youth is coming, they will think about themselves...” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulgary!)







oigon

oilon

jasa









“That is as it should be. Sons take the place of their fathers. Sons continue the line, continue the work. God grant he becomes like his father. And may he go further, may he rise above us in wisdom and skill, may he create happiness for himself and others. That is why we are fathers, that is why we give birth to sons with the hope that they will be better than us, that is the whole essence of it.” (Chingiz Aitmatov, Farewell, Gulsary!)



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PHOTO TOUR AND MAKING OF THE PHOTO ALBUM

And this is where new perspectives begin. Four young photographers from India, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia arrive to capture the country as they see it — through curiosity, discovery, and their own unique lens.

And the deeper they went into its culture, the more they saw the connection between generations...and the future growing from these traditions.

Far Beyond Borders: Kyrgyzstan





































“There, beyond the river, somewhere on the edge of the Kazakh steppe, the evening sun of haymaking glowed like the mouth of a blazing tandyr oven. It slowly sank toward the horizon, staining the loose clouds on the sky with crimson glow and casting its last gleams on the lilac steppe, already veiled in the lowlands by the blue haze of early twilight.”

(Chingiz Aitmatov, Jamila)







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